

**Minutes of Adjourned Budget meeting of Monaghan County Council held in the Council Chamber, Mtek Building, Monaghan on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, 2014 at 10.00 am.**

**Chair:** Cllr S. Conlon, Mayor.

**Present:** Cllrs Bannigan, Bennett, Carthy, Carville, Connolly, Crowe, Coyle, Gallagher, Keelan, Maxwell, McElvaney, McKenna, McNally, McPhillips, Murray, O'Brien, O'Hanlon, P. Treanor and S. Treanor.

Mr. E. Cummins, County Manager, Mr. P. Clifford, Mr. A. King, and Mr. D. Treanor, Directors of Service, Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance, Mr. J. McNally, Financial Management Accountant and Ms. C. Thornton, Meetings Administrator.

At the outset, the Mayor informed the members that the County Manager wished to announce changes to the various Directorates within the Council.

Mr. E. Cummins, County Manager then advised the members that he had made the following changes, effective from 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2014:

1. **Governance and Corporate Affairs** to be assigned to Mr. Adge King, Director of Services. Mr. King to also have responsibility for Clones Town Council.

This includes Governance, especially in the context of the Municipal Districts. It also includes Risk Management and the production of a Code of Corporate Governance. The Directorate also includes the management of the Joint Policing Committee on behalf of the Manager; Internal Audit; Libraries, Arts, Museum and Environment.

2. **Operational Control** (Roads, Water Services and Emergency Services) to be assigned to Mr. Damien Treanor, A/Director. Mr. Treanor is also being assigned responsibility for Health and Safety.
3. **Economic Development** (to include Planning, Community & Enterprise, Cross Border Groups/Initiatives) to be assigned to Mr. Paul Clifford. Mr. Clifford to be also assigned Industrial Relations and to have responsibility for Carrickmacross, Monaghan and Castleblayney Town Councils.
4. **Finance and Housing** to be assigned to Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance. Mr. Murray to have responsibility for Ballybay Town Council.

The members resumed consideration of the Draft Budget for 2014.

**Division C – Water Services:**

Mr. J. Murray, Head of Finance advised that consideration of the expenditure and income provision for 2014 had been completed at the previous meeting.

Mr. P. Clifford, Director of Services referred to the legal opinion which had been sought in relation to the validity of Section 12 of the Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013, which provides for the vesting of the property of a water services authority to Irish Water pursuant to an

order made by the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government. He had circulated a copy to each member.

The opinion of Mr. Jarlath Fitzsimons B.L. concluded “that a Ministerial Order appointing a ‘vesting date’, and commencing a statutory vesting procedure, is an appropriate and constitutional method of effecting the transfer of water services assets from water services authorities (such as the Querist local authority) to Irish Water, in circumstances where the Oireachtas has, by the same statute, expressly provided for the transfer of such water services functions from local authorities to Irish Water”

In response to a query from Cllr Bannigan, Mr. Murray stated that the nett book value of the assets being transferred to Irish Water is €126.8m. He stated that there are debit balances of €5.6m and loan liabilities of €5.3m. Development contributions amount to approx €3.8m

Cllr O’Hanlon stated that he was not happy that €126m worth of assets was being transferred to Irish Water and Monaghan County Council was not being reimbursed for them.

#### **Division D – Development Management:**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2014 under this division.

Cllr Bannigan welcomed the recommendation from the Corporate Policy Group that the Council would support, through the Community Development Fund, the hosting of the Irish Show Society’s Annual Conference in Co. Monaghan later this year.

Cllr Carville referred to the need ensure the protection of archival material, particularly with the abolition of the Town Councils. He asked the County Manager examine the matter and if necessary consider a shared service with another local authority.

Mr. Cummins, County Manager stated that the Council had an obligation in relation to the preservation of archival material. He said he would discuss the matter with the Cavan County Manager whom he would be meeting in the near future.

Cllr P. Treanor suggested that before making any decision in relation to a shared service for archives that the Council might explore the possibility of linking with either Tyrone, Fermanagh or Armagh as there may be an opportunity to avail of cross border funding for this purpose.

Cllr Conlon referred to the abolition of the Town Councils and stated that it would be necessary to formally mark the occasion and in particular the contribution made by the various Town Councils since their formation. He requested the County Manager/Town Managers might meet to discuss the matter.

At this point Cllr McElvaney withdrew from the meeting room.

## **Division E – Environmental Services**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2014 under this division.

A discussion took place on littering and the need to providing more CCTV cameras to monitor the dumping of litter along the road network and in various parts of the county.

Mr. D. Treanor responded to the issues raised during the discussion and stated that the Council provided supported the work of tidy towns and communities involved in Spring Clean activities. The Council use mobile cameras to detect those dumping illegally.

*On the proposal of Cllr O'Brien, seconded by Cllr Conlon it was agreed that the Council investigate the possibility of hiring a private firm that uses special cameras and other methods to catch people littering.*

In response to queries from the members in relation to the Council's Landfill at Scotch Corner, Mr. D. Treanor A/Director of Services advised that the landfill is being operated at the lowest possible cost to the Council. If the landfill were to close now, there would still be maintenance costs (leachate, gas, etc) for the next 30 years. Income has been maximised over the last few years. He stated that the Council will seek tenders in the near future for the engagement of Consultants to prepare a report on the feasibility of an Integrated Constructed Wetlands project at the landfill site.

*On the proposal of Cllr O'Hanlon, seconded by Cllr O'Brien it was agreed that a Business Plan be prepared in relation to the Landfill Site at Scotch Corner and presented to the Council.*

*On the proposal of Cllr Carthy, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that the Council re-affirm the policy that any surplus income arising would be transferred into a fund to reduce capital debt on the landfill.*

## **Division F – Recreation and Amenity**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2014 under this division.

*On the proposal of Cllr Maxwell, seconded by Cllr Carville it was agreed that, going forward, an amount of money be set aside at the annual Budget meeting for a sinking fund for Monaghan Leisure Centre so as to maintain the Council's investment to a proper and fit standard.*

Cllr B. McKenna requested that the Council receive a report on the impact the embargo is having on the services it provides.

Mr. Cummins, County Manager stated that the Management Team will be looking at staffing/services over the next few weeks. The cost base of all activities will be examined with the primary objective being to maintain and improve the level of services being provided by the Council.

#### **Division G – Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare:**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2014 under this division.

#### **Division H – Miscellaneous Services**

Mr. John Murray, Head of Finance outlined the proposed expenditure and income provision for 2014 under this division.

Cllr Crowe requested that the members be advised of any balance remaining on the Conferences Budget for 2013.

Cllr P. Treanor asked the County Manager to look at the possibility of appointing an Irish Language Officer to fulfil the obligations of the Official Languages Act and to support the work of An Coiste Gaeilge.

#### **Adoption of Draft Budget 2014:**

*On the proposal of Cllr Bannigan, seconded by Cllr Maxwell it was agreed that the Council adopt the draft Budget for 2014, as presented.*

#### **Determination of Annual Rate on Valuation:**

*On the proposal of Cllr Carville, seconded by Cllr Bannigan, it was agreed, that the general Annual Rate on Valuation for 2014 of 56.20 and town charges rate of 9.50 for Ballybay Town be adopted.*

The Mayor thanked the members of the Corporate Policy Group, the Management Team, and all the staff who contributed to the preparation of the draft budget.

The meeting then concluded.